DAWN

# Mobilisation drive in Sindh against 27th Amendment

• Opposition alliance says campaign to begin from Kamo Shaheed will cover several cities in province • Accuses PPP of using Section 144 to curb political gatherings • Adil Sheikh terms amendment against judicial independence

By Imran Ayub

KARACHI: Opposition alliance Tehreek Tahafuz Ayeen-i-Pakistan (TTAP) on Sunday announced a three-day public mobilisation campaign during the first week of December, beginning from Kamo Shaheed in Ghotki and culminating in Karachi as part of its ongoing "struggle" across the country against the 27th Constitutional Amendment.

A key meeting of TTAP was held under the chairmanship of Syed Zain Shah, the vice chairman of alliance's Sindh chapter.

Senior leaders including PTI Sindh President Haleem Adil Sheikh, Majlis Wahdat-i-Muslimeen's (MWM) Allama Sadiq Jaffery, Sindh United Party's (SUP) Munir Naich, PkMAP's Sarbaz Abdul Rab, Bashir Khan Tareen and others attended the session.

The forum reviewed the country's prevailing political and constitutional situation and approved several decisions.

A statement issued after the meeting said that opposition leaders resolved that the TTAP would launch a three-day public mobilisation campaign during the first week of December, beginning from Kamo Shaheed in Ghotki and culminating in Karachi. Key leaders of the TTAP would address the public along the route.

"The participants of the meeting lauded the people of Sindh for observing Black Day on November 21 and appreciated the ongoing struggle of lawyers across the country against the 27th Constitutional Amendment," it said.

Speaking to the media after the meeting, TTAP vice chairman and SUP Chief Syed Zain Shah said the three-day rally would travel through multiple cities before reaching Karachi on the third day.

He said the public had grown weary of the current system, which had been marred by unemployment, economic hardship and rising inflation.

"The 27th Amendment has undermined the supremacy of the Constitution and the rule of law," he added.

He accused the PPP of repeatedly enforcing Section 144 across Sindh to avoid facing the public's reaction.

"After TTAP announced a public rally in Hyderabad, the sudden imposition of Section 144 throughout the province has proved that the PPP has lost its popular support in Sindh," he said.

He added that the nationwide movement had now entered a decisive phase and attempts to "suppress public opinion or impose governments on the basis of a fabricated mandate would no longer be tolerated."

Mr Sheikh of PTI said the 27th Constitutional Amendment had "stripped the judiciary of its independence" and that only a people's struggle could dismantle the system established through a "stolen mandate".

He said the government was introducing "anti-people" amendments while keeping PTI founder Imran Khan in "unjust imprisonment".

"These measures will not be accepted under any circumstances," he said.

Large public gatherings, he said, would be held in several cities during the December campaign.

GUJRANWALA: A potter sets freshly prepared clay pots out in the sun to bake at his workplace.—PPI

# Attacks on two Bannu police stations foiled

Ghoriwala and Wazir police stations attacked with light and heavy weapons

By Ghulam Mursalin Marwat

LAKKI MARWAT: Police foiled terrorist attacks on two police stations in Bannu district late on Saturday night.

A police official said that militants targeted two police stations — one in Ghoriwala town and the other in Wazir subdivision — but the law enforcers deployed there responded vigorously and forced the assailants to flee. He said the attackers, armed with light and heavy weapons, launched the attack on Ghoriwala police station at 11:45pm. After an intense exchange of fire that lasted around 10 minutes, the terrorists escaped.

Separately, in another attack after midnight, the terrorists opened fire on the Wazir police station from the nearby mountains in an attempt to cause casualties and damage to the building, the official said.

He added that police retaliated the attack effectively and after a fierce gun battle that continued for about 25 minutes, the assailants fled the area.

"Although the terrorists used advanced weapons in both attacks they failed to cause any damage to the police installations," he claimed, adding that all policemen remained safe.

The official revealed that the police had repelled more than 140 terrorist attacks on police stations and posts in the region over the past three months.

He added that scores of militants had been killed or injured in various operations conducted in Bannu, Lakki Marwat and North Waziristan districts.

# 'Restrictions on overloaded trucks reduce fatal crashes'

By Syed Irfan Raza

ISLAMABAD: The National Highways and Motorway Police (NHMP) claimed to have controlled overloading of trucks, resulting in 99 per cent reduction in fatal truck accidents over the last four months in northern region (Kot Momin to D.I. Khan).

A senior official of NHMP told *Dawn* that not a single fatal accident has taken place in northern region from Kot Momin to Peshawar, China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC route) from Halka to D.I. Khan, Swat and Hazara motorways over the last four months. He said that before enforcement of strict measures an average of one fatal accident involving trucks used to be reported on a daily basis in the same region.

"When overloaded trucks were chased by police, their drivers often tried to escape and due to overspeeding accidents took place. Sometimes they (drivers) hit cars and motorcycles while fleeing causing fatal accidents," the official said.

He added that due to overloading and overspeeding trucks often overturned and fell off the road. Under a new strategy, he said, the NHMP did not allow trucks to use highways and motorways without going to the trucks scale so that not a single truck could carry any material more than the prescribed weight limit.

# Immunity 'concentrates unchecked power in few hands': HRCP

• Says 27th Amendment undermines judicial independence, expands executive control • Fears erosion of checks and balances, parliamentary supremacy
• Asserts efforts to curb militancy must not trample basic freedoms, right to dissent • Alarmed by harassment, detention, forced repatriation of Afghan refugees

By Imran Gabol

LAHORE: The Human Rights Commission of Pakistan (HRCP) on Sunday expressed concern over the 27th Constitutional Amendment, warning that lifetime immunity for public officeholders had "concentrated unchecked power in the hands of a few".

The contentious legislation was passed by parliament on Nov 13 after days of heated debate, opposition protests and last-minute revisions, and received the president's assent the same day.

The amendment made significant changes to the judicial system and the military's chain of command, and granted sweeping immunities to government officials.

Under the amendment, lifetime immunity from arrest and all criminal and civil proceedings has been granted to the president and anyone holding the ranks of field marshal, admiral of the fleet, and marshal of the air force.

In a statement issued after its 39th annual general meeting, the HRCP, referring to the amendment, drew attention to "escalating threats to constitutional democracy, civic freedoms and the safety of vulnerable communities across the country".

The human rights body said it "is deeply concerned over the passage of the 27th Constitutional Amendment, which undermines judicial independence by expanding executive control over matters that should remain free from executive interference".

"The amendment further weakens essential checks and balances at a time when public trust in state institutions is fragile. Lifetime immunity for holders of public office has concentrated unchecked power in the hands of a few, eroding parliamentary supremacy," it said.

The human rights body also stressed that empowered and elected local governments were critical for deepening democracy and strengthening citizens' participation in governance.

It underlined that efforts to curb militancy in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Balochistan "must protect fundamental freedoms and the right to dissent".

"Blanket internet shutdowns in Balochistan and other parts of the country have disrupted education, livelihoods and democratic participation and must end immediately," the HRCP said.

It urged the federal and provincial governments "to implement rights-respecting security measures, conduct impartial investigations into abuses by state actors and engage meaningfully with local communities".

This included ending enforced disappearances and the use of interment centres without due process, the commission said, stressing that the use of the Fourth Schedule to muzzle dissent "must cease".

The Fourth Schedule of the Anti-Terrorism Act 1997 (ATA) is a list of individuals placed under observation by the government on suspicion of their involvement in terrorism or sectarianism.

**Afghan refugees' repatriation**

The statement added that the HRCP "notes with alarm the ongoing harassment, detention and forced repatriation of Afghan refugees, many facing credible threats of persecution, family separation and severe humanitarian distress".

"The government must suspend deportations, ensure due process and uphold international protection standards. Pakistan should ratify the 1951 UN Refugee Convention and 1967 Protocol and protect the right to citizenship by birth and naturalisation," the HRCP emphasised.

It further stated that custodial torture and extrajudicial killings, "particularly involving Crime Control Department and Counter-Terrorism Department personnel", demanded urgent independent inquiries and accountability. "Such violations perpetuate impunity and threaten citizens' right to life and dignity," it said.

Moreover, the HRCP noted that religious minorities, especially Ahmadis, continued to face mob violence, attacks on their sites or worship and desecration of graves.

The state must ensure protection, prosecute incitement and implement the delayed commission to investigate misuse of the blasphemy law, as well as legislate against forced conversions, the HRCP statement added.

It said that child marriage remained pervasive in the country, endangering girls' health, education and futures.

The HRCP called for legislative reforms to define a minor consistently across laws and declare all marriages under 18 illegal.

"Sexual harassment in educational, public and private institutions also persists; robust reporting, transparent accountability and preventive training are essential to safeguard learning environments and workplaces," it added.

The commission also urged the government to protect climate-displaced persons, especially in Gilgit-Baltistan, with safe shelter, essential services and sustainable resettlement solutions.

The authorities must also ensure long-term support for rebuilding homes and livelihoods for those affected by the recent floods, particularly in south Punjab, the HRCP said.

It stressed that incarcerated Indian and Pakistani fisherfolk must be repatriated to their countries and receive humane treatment, legal representation and protection from arbitrary detention to preserve their rights and livelihoods.